Leonard D. DuBoff – Oregon State Bar No. 774378

(Pro Hac Vice Application to Be Submitted)

Edward T. Fu – Oregon State Bar No.

113899

(Pro Hac Vice Application to Be Submitted)

The DuBoff Law Group, PC

6665 SW Hampton Street, Suite 200

Portland, Oregon 97223-8357 Telephone: (503) 968-8111

Fax: (503) 868-7228

Email: lduboff@dubofflaw.com
Email: efu@dubofflaw.com

Leo Y. Shimizu 010978

Go Law Office LLLC

1441 Kapiolani Blvd. Ste. 910

Honolulu, HI 96814

Telephone: (808) 679-2049 Facsimile: (808) 425-4717 Email: leo@golaw-hi.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs
TRENDTEX FABRICS, LTD and
TRENDTEX HOLDING, LLC

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

DISTRICT OF HAWAII

TRENDTEX FABRICS, LTD., a Hawaii corporation; and TRENDTEX HOLDING, LLC, a Hawaii limited liability company,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Case No.

COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

BLACK PEARLS OF POLYNESIA, LLC, a Hawaii limited liability company, and STEEVE ATHLAN, an individual.

Defendants.

Plaintiffs TRENDTEX FABRICS, LTD and TRENDTEX HOLDING, LLC ("Plaintiffs"), by and through their undersigned counsel, hereby allege as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is an action for copyright infringement under Section 501 of the Copyright Act. This action arises out of the defendants' unauthorized reproduction and sale of copyrighted fabric surface designs owned by Plaintiff. Accordingly, Plaintiffs seek relief under the Copyright Act of the United States, as amended, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seg*.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction under 17 U.S.C. §§ 101 *et seq.* and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338, as these claims arise under the laws of the United States.
- 3. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the defendants. Venue is appropriate in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391 and 1400 because Defendant BLACK PEARLS OF POLYNESIA, LLC has its principal place of business in this District and Defendant STEEVE ATHLAN is a resident of this District.

PARTIES

- 4. Plaintiff TRENDTEX FABRICS, LTD ("Trendtex Fabrics") is a corporation that is incorporated in the State of Hawaii and has its principal place of business in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- 5. Plaintiff TRENDTEX HOLDING, LLC ("Trendtex Holding") is a limited liability company organized in the State of Hawaii and has its principal place of business in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- 6. Defendant BLACK PEARLS OF POLYNESIA, LLC ("BLACK PEARLS") is a limited liability company corporation that is organized in the State of Hawaii and has its principal place of business at 2324 Waiomao Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816.
- 7. Based on information and belief, STEEVE ATHLAN is a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS and a resident of the State of Hawaii.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

8. Plaintiff Trendtex Holdings is the owner of the copyrights to numerous Hawaiian print surface designs. Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics is a fabric wholesaler. Plaintiff Trendtex Holdings exclusively licenses its copyrighted surface designs to Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics, which manufactures and wholesales fabrics displaying these copyrighted surface designs to garment manufacturers and

retail fabric sellers. These fabric purchasers are in turn granted a license to display and sell garments or printed materials made from the purchased fabrics. These displays are limited to advertising and sales purposes only and do not permit the garment manufacturers, retail fabric sellers, or consumers to copy or reproduce the printed surface designs for any other purpose.

- 9. Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics also makes samples of its designs publicly available for viewing on its websites <u>trendtex-fabrics.com</u> and <u>hawaiibarkcloth.com</u> as well as in person at its place of business. These public displays of the copyrighted surface designs are for advertising and sales purposes only; they do not give viewers permission to use the designs without Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics' express license, authorization, or consent.
- 10. Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics is the registrant of the Hawaiian print fabric surface design identified as HMA-002 and registered with the United States Copyright Office as part of copyright registration certificate VAu 1-259-470. This copyright was assigned to Plaintiff Trendtex Holding on October 5, 2022, and licensed back to Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics.
- 11. Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics is the registrant of the Hawaiian print fabric surface design identified as FW-007 and registered with the United States Copyright Office as part of copyright registration certificate VAu 1-349-149. This copyright was assigned to Plaintiff Trendtex Holding on October 5, 2022, and

licensed back to Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics.

- 12. Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics is the registrant of a Hawaiian print fabric surface design identified as GH-011 that has been registered with the United States Copyright Office as part of copyright registration certificate VAu 1-391-529. This copyright was assigned to Plaintiff Trendtex Holding on October 5, 2022, and licensed back to Plaintiff Trendtex Fabrics.
- 13. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS is engaged in the business of designing and selling clothing and jewelry under the name AROUND THE PEARL and operates both a brick-and-mortar retail store located at 1450 Ala Moana Blvd, Suite 210, Honolulu, Hawaii 98614 and a website located at www.aroundthepearl.shop.
- 14. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS is also engaged in the business of designing and selling clothing and jewelry under the name VAIHIRIA DESIGN. This merchandise is then sold in AROUND THE PEARL's brick-and-mortar and online stores.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Copyright Infringement – The HMA-002 Surface Design)

- 15. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 14 as if fully restated herein.
- 16. On or about August 4, 2022, Plaintiffs discovered a garment (the "Red Dress") was being sold by BLACK PEARLS at its retail store in Honolulu.

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- 17. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has sold the Red Dress in this District.
- 18. The Red Dress bears a print design that is substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs' copyrighted HMA-002 surface design. A side-by-side comparison of Plaintiffs' HMA-002 surface design and the Red Dress is set forth in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1



19. Plaintiffs have neither licensed BLACK PEARLS to reproduce or sell the copyrighted HMA-002 surface design nor sold fabric to BLACK PEARLS containing the copyrighted HMA-002 surface design. Plaintiffs have also not been compensated for BLACK PEARLS' use of the copyrighted HMA-002 surface design. BLACK PEARLS' importation, manufacture, and/or sale of clothing displaying a surface design substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs'

copyrighted HMA-002 surface design is therefore unauthorized.

- 20. On August 8, 2022, Plaintiffs' counsel sent a notice of copyright infringement to Defendants' counsel via email.
- 21. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS had access to Plaintiffs' HMA-002 surface design, including, without limitation, through (a) Plaintiffs' website or place of business; (b) access to fabric displaying the infringed surface design at fabric stores or other retailers; (c) access to garments or accessory products in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the HMA-002 surface design; (d) access to samples displayed by Plaintiffs' licensees; and/or (e) access to garments in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the HMA-002 surface design.
- 22. The acts by BLACK PEARLS complained of herein constitute infringement of Plaintiffs' copyright and exclusive rights including, without limitation, their rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106.
- 23. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has realized profits as a direct and proximate result of its wrongful conduct.
- 24. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has willfully engaged in the acts complained of in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.
 - 25. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant

ATHLAN had the right and ability to stop or limit BLACK PEARLS' infringement but failed to exercise that right.

- 26. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant ATHLAN enjoyed a direct financial benefit from BLACK PEARLS' direct infringement of the HMA-002 surface design.
- 27. Defendant ATHLAN has therefore vicariously infringed Plaintiffs' copyright of the HMA-002 surface design.
- 28. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs have sustained and will continue to sustain substantial and irreparable harm for which there is no adequate remedy at law. Plaintiffs therefore are entitled to a permanent injunction restraining and enjoining the infringing conduct.
- 29. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs are entitled to damages and to Defendants' profits pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b) attributable to their infringing conduct, and an accounting of and a constructive trust with respect to such profits.
- 30. Alternatively, Plaintiffs are entitled to statutory damages up to \$150,000 pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).
- 31. Plaintiffs are further entitled to recover their full costs and attorney fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

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SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Copyright Infringement – The FW-007 Surface Design)

- 32. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 31 as if fully restated herein.
- 33. On or about August 4, 2022, Plaintiffs discovered a garment (the "Pink Dress") was being sold by BLACK PEARLS at its retail store in Honolulu.
- 34. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has sold the Pink Dress in this District.
- 35. The Pink Dress bears a print design that is substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs' copyrighted FW-007 surface design. A side-by-side comparison of Plaintiffs' FW-007 surface design and the Pink Dress is set forth in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2

FW-007	Pink Dress
VOL COST	

36. Plaintiffs have neither licensed BLACK PEARLS to reproduce or sell the copyrighted FW-007 surface design nor sold fabric to BLACK PEARLS containing the copyrighted FW-007 surface design. Plaintiffs have also not been COMPLAINT - 9

compensated for BLACK PEARLS' use of the copyrighted FW-007 surface design. BLACK PEARLS' importation, manufacture, and/or sale of clothing displaying a surface design substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs' copyrighted FW-007 surface design is therefore unauthorized.

- 37. On August 8, 2022, Plaintiffs' counsel sent a notice of copyright infringement to Defendants' counsel via email.
- 38. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS had access to Plaintiffs' FW-007 surface design, including, without limitation, through (a) Plaintiffs' website or place of business; (b) access to fabric displaying the infringed surface design at fabric stores or other retailers; (c) access to garments or accessory products in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the FW-007 surface design; (d) access to samples displayed by Plaintiffs' licensees; and/or (e) access to garments in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the FW-007 surface design.
- 39. The acts by BLACK PEARLS complained of herein constitute infringement of Plaintiffs' copyright and exclusive rights including, without limitation, their rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106.
- 40. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has realized profits as a direct and proximate result of its wrongful conduct.
 - 41. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has willfully

engaged in the acts complained of in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.

- 42. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant ATHLAN had the right and ability to stop or limit BLACK PEARLS' infringement but failed to exercise that right.
- 43. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant ATHLAN enjoyed a direct financial benefit from BLACK PEARLS' direct infringement of the FW-007 surface design.
- 44. Defendant ATHLAN has therefore vicariously infringed Plaintiffs' copyright of the FW-007 surface design.
- 45. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs have sustained and will continue to sustain substantial and irreparable harm for which there is no adequate remedy at law. Plaintiffs therefore are entitled to a permanent injunction restraining and enjoining the infringing conduct.
- 46. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs are entitled to damages and to Defendants' profits pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b) attributable to their infringing conduct, and an accounting of and a constructive trust with respect to such profits.
- 47. Alternatively, Plaintiffs are entitled to statutory damages up to \$150,000 pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).
 - 48. Plaintiffs are further entitled to recover their full costs and attorney

fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Copyright Infringement – The GH-011 Surface Design)

- 49. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all of the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 48 as if fully restated herein.
- 50. On or about August 24, 2022, Plaintiffs discovered a garment (the "Multicolor Shirt") manufactured by VAIHIRIA DESIGN was being sold by BLACK PEARLS at its retail store in Honolulu.
- 51. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has sold the Multicolor Shirt in this District.
- 52. The Multicolor Shirt bears a print design that is substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs' copyrighted GH-011 surface design. A side-by-side comparison of Plaintiffs' GH-011 surface design and the Multicolor Shirt is set forth in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3

GH-011	Multicolor Shirt				

- 53. Plaintiffs have neither licensed BLACK PEARLS to reproduce or sell the copyrighted GH-011 surface design nor sold fabric to BLACK PEARLS containing the copyrighted GH-011 surface design. Plaintiffs have also not been compensated for BLACK PEARLS' use of the copyrighted GH-011 surface design. BLACK PEARLS' importation, manufacture, and/or sale of clothing displaying a surface design substantially similar or identical to Plaintiffs' copyrighted GH-011 surface design is therefore unauthorized.
- 54. On August 25, 2022, Plaintiffs' counsel sent a notice of copyright infringement to Defendants' counsel via email.
- 55. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS had access to Plaintiffs' GH-011 surface design, including, without limitation, through (a) Plaintiffs' website or place of business; (b) access to fabric displaying the infringed surface design at fabric stores or other retailers; (c) access to garments or accessory products in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the GH-011 surface design; (d) access to samples displayed by Plaintiffs' licensees; and/or (e) access to garments in the marketplace manufactured with lawfully printed fabric displaying the GH-011 surface design.
- 56. The acts by BLACK PEARLS complained of herein constitute infringement of Plaintiffs' copyright and exclusive rights including, without limitation, their rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106.

- 57. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has realized profits as a direct and proximate result of its wrongful conduct.
- 58. Based on information and belief, BLACK PEARLS has willfully engaged in the acts complained of in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.
- 59. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant ATHLAN had the right and ability to stop or limit BLACK PEARLS' infringement but failed to exercise that right.
- 60. As a member and principal of BLACK PEARLS, Defendant ATHLAN enjoyed a direct financial benefit from BLACK PEARLS' direct infringement of the GH-011 surface design.
- 61. Defendant ATHLAN has therefore vicariously infringed Plaintiffs' copyright of the GH-011 surface design.
- 62. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs have sustained and will continue to sustain substantial and irreparable harm for which there is no adequate remedy at law. Plaintiffs therefore are entitled to a permanent injunction restraining and enjoining the infringing conduct.
- 63. As a direct and proximate result of the infringement by Defendants, Plaintiffs are entitled to damages and to Defendants' profits pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b) attributable to their infringing conduct, and an accounting of and a constructive trust with respect to such profits.

- 64. Alternatively, Plaintiffs are entitled to statutory damages up to \$150,000 pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).
- 65. Plaintiffs are further entitled to recover their full costs and attorney fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray for judgment of up to \$450,000 and other relief as follows:

- A. On Plaintiffs' First Claim for Relief against Defendants:
 - a. That the Defendants be adjudged to have infringed upon Plaintiffs' copyrighted HMA-002 surface design in violation of 17 U.S.C. §
 501;
 - b. That Defendants be permanently enjoined from importing, manufacturing, distributing, offering for sale, selling or otherwise trafficking in any product that infringes Plaintiffs' copyrighted HMA-002 surface design;
 - c. That Defendants be required to account for all profits derived from their infringement of Plaintiffs' copyrighted HMA-002 surface design;
 - d. That Plaintiffs be awarded either actual damages plus Defendants' profits from their infringement; or, alternatively at Plaintiffs' election, statutory damages up to \$150,000 against Defendants, jointly and severally, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c);
- e. That Plaintiffs be awarded their costs and reasonable attorneys' fees COMPLAINT 15

- pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
- f. That Plaintiffs be awarded pre- and post-judgment interest according to law; and
- g. That Plaintiffs be awarded such other and further relief as is just and proper.
- B. On Plaintiffs' Second Claim for Relief against Defendants:
 - a. That the above Defendants be adjudged to have infringed upon
 Plaintiffs' copyrighted FW-007 surface design in violation of 17
 U.S.C. § 501;
 - b. That the Defendants be permanently enjoined from importing,
 manufacturing, distributing, offering for sale, selling or otherwise
 trafficking in any product that infringes Plaintiffs' copyrighted FW 007 surface design;
 - c. That Defendants be required to account for all profits derived from their infringement of Plaintiffs' copyrighted FW-007 surface design;
 - d. That Plaintiffs be awarded either actual damages plus Defendants' profits from their infringement; or, alternatively at Plaintiffs' election, statutory damages up to \$150,000 against Defendants, jointly and severally, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c);
 - e. That Plaintiffs be awarded their costs and reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
 - f. That Plaintiffs be awarded pre- and post-judgment interest according to law; and

- g. That Plaintiffs be awarded such other and further relief as is just and proper.
- C. On Plaintiffs' Third Claim for Relief against Defendants:
 - a. That Defendants be adjudged to have infringed upon Plaintiffs' copyrighted GH-011 surface design in violation of 17 U.S.C. § 501;
 - b. That Defendants be permanently enjoined from importing,
 manufacturing, distributing, offering for sale, selling or otherwise
 trafficking in any product that infringes Plaintiffs' copyrighted GH 011 surface design;
 - c. That Defendants be required to account for all profits derived from their infringement of Plaintiffs' copyrighted GH-011 surface design;
 - d. That Plaintiffs be awarded either actual damages plus Defendants' profits from their infringement; or, alternatively at Plaintiffs' election, statutory damages up to \$150,000 against Defendants, jointly and severally, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c);
 - e. That Plaintiffs be awarded their costs and reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
 - f. That Plaintiffs be awarded pre- and post-judgment interest according to law; and
 - g. That Plaintiffs be awarded such other and further relief as is just and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiffs

hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

DATED this 7th day of November 2022.

/s/ Leo Y. Shimizu

Leo Y. Shimizu Go Law Office LLLC 1441 Kapiolani Blvd. Ste. 910 Honolulu, HI 96814

Telephone: (808) 679-2049 Facsimile: (808) 425-4717 Email: <u>leo@golaw-hi.com</u>

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The DuBoff Law Group, PC 6665 SW Hampton Street, Suite 200 Portland, OR 97223-8357

Email: <u>lduboff@dubofflaw.com</u> Email: <u>efu@dubofflaw.com</u> Telephone: (503) 968-8111

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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